



COMIC SHOP NEWS



SUPERMAN

Brian Bendis, Writer of Steel



Brian Michael Bendis is the new Man Behind the Man of Steel.

Of course, that's not news to anyone who's a regular DC reader (or to anyone who's been reading CSN, since we've been reporting on it since late 2017!). While we've had a lot of information about when and where Brian's Superman tales will appear and in what format, we haven't heard much from the man himself as to what his plans are.

Thankfully, Bendis is one of the most amiable, personable, and helpful people in comics, so that omission is quite easy to remedy!

Readers have already seen Bendis's first Superman tale in *Action Comics* #1000 (where he introduced a major new villain—and a major change into the Kryptonian canon) and in *DC Nation* #0. But his run begins in earnest at the end of May with the release of *Man of Steel*, a six-issue weekly series that explores the ramifications of the big reveal at the end of *Action* #1000 and lays the groundwork for what will follow in *Superman* and *Action Comics*.

Bendis explained that he chose to begin with the six-part *Man of Steel* because "a very big story revealed itself. When that happens, you kind of let publishing find its shape. This one easily revealed itself to be the shape of this miniseries—which then made you think about the most famous Superman miniseries, which is, of course, *Man of Steel* [the 1986 John Byrne miniseries that reinvented and revitalized the post-*Crisis on Infinite Earths* Superman]. And then, of course, people obviously made the connection between myself and John Byrne—the Marvel person leaving to take on Superman. Obviously, people can already tell this is a very different story than John Byrne's. It has a different purpose. But what it means to the character going forward is just as big...in theory," Bendis smiled.

"So *Man of Steel* kind of lays the very strong weekly groundwork for what's coming," Bendis continued. "Then both *Superman* and *Action Comics* will be coming right after that. And by the end of *Action*, you will understand what both books need to do."

As previously mentioned, Bendis has already introduced a significant wrinkle into the backstory of Krypton, which will in turn affect what we know about Superman's origins. What was

the thinking behind this alteration, and were there any trepidations about such a big change? "It came from the best place," Bendis said. "I was thinking about why Superman's rogues gallery is not as deep as his other peers' in the superhero genre. Compared to Bruce Wayne's or Peter's, Clark's rogues gallery could use a little more 'meat on the bone.' So thinking about what kind of villains and adversaries could really get under Clark's skin, I started to think about the legacy of Superman and the legacy of Krypton, and how most of what we know about this has come from his father's perspective.

"I know there have been other stories where we have seen Krypton from other perspectives, but for most of Clark's life, it's been from his father's. But we can imagine there are many other perspectives. So I called [DC Co-publisher] Dan DiDio and I asked, 'Gave you ever done a story about what really happened to Krypton?' And he asked back, almost whispering conspiratorially, 'Why? What really happened with Krypton?' And I smiled, because I knew I was going to have a very good time working for Dan. He likes story.

"This idea had not been done before, and everyone got really excited about it. It adds this great wrinkle to the Superman saga, but it's all done in the service of digging deeper into Clark's character and what his purpose is on Earth."

In *Man of Steel*, Bendis is touching on pretty much every core aspect of the Superman mythos. Does he intend to re-establish the core elements of Superman's backstory? "Yes. It's such a unique experience for me," Bendis said. "I love these characters so much; much of it was relegated to just being a fan. But now I am responsible for them. I got so I opened this box that's built from decades of love and affection for every aspect of his character—and now I have to not only express that affection, but also find my voice in all of it! I have to find my way into Superman. So this miniseries gave me this opportunity not only to do that, but also to start dipping my toe into other parts of the DC universe. This is the miniseries where I first wrote Batman and Green Lantern and the flash. This is really exciting stuff for me personally!"

Does Bendis feel that fans of the Peter Tomasi and Dan Jurgens runs find that Bendis's Superman builds on what came

before, rather than scratching it all and starting over? "I absolutely do," he said. "I do understand when fans get nervous about change. And I get it when people get nervous about me making that change because I have come onto books and franchises and blown up Avengers Mansion and brought the teen-age X-Men to the present. I have killed Professor X and Spider-Man. So I understand why people would be worried about me.

"But I have gone on record—and people will see very clearly—that we are going to be making some ballsy moves, just like every creator I've ever loved. But we are not doing so as a sacrifice of what these great creators have created. This is not a reboot. This is a continuation.

"I am standing on Dan Jurgens's shoulders. I have told him, and I have said publicly, that one of the great joys of coming to DC was becoming professional pals with Dan. I'm following someone who accomplished with Superman something only a couple of other creators have ever accomplished in the history of our culture. What Dan has accomplished with Superman is equal to what Chris Claremont accomplished with X-Men. And just like I would never do anything that would damage Chris's legacy, I would never do anything that would damage Dan's.

"At least, not on purpose!" Bendis added with a grin.

From *Man of Steel*, the story will flow into *Superman* #1 and *Action Comics* #1001 in July. Will Bendis be doing one storyline in the two books, or will each title feature its own story arc? "*Superman* is going to be focused on the superhero Superman and his big—and I mean big!—adventures. The kind of adventures only Superman can have. While *Action Comics* will star Clark Kent and Superman, but will be more grounded in Metropolis and the *Daily Planet* and Clark's responsibilities to the pursuit of truth, justice, and the American way. Both books star Superman, but each of them shows a different aspect of his life.

"Much like when I was writing *New Avengers* and *Mighty Avengers*, you will be rewarded for reading both, if you so choose—but you will not be punished for reading just one or the other."

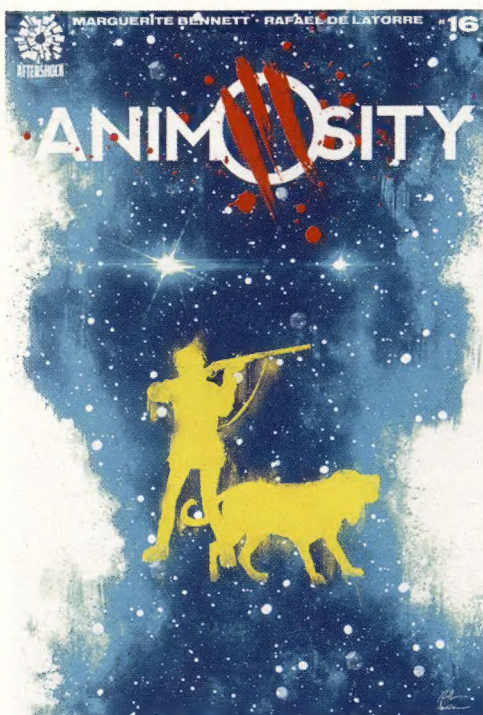
Will other "absent" Super-titles (*Super Sons*, *Supergirl*, etc) return? And if so, will Bendis be working to coordinate additional Superman family titles with his core storylines in *Superman* and *Action*? "This is just the beginning," Bendis said. "There are much bigger Superman family book plans I had. Throughout the entire year, there will be some relaunches. There will be some brand-new titles. There will be some genuine surprises—and some surprise creators, as well. DC is really into creators shepherding their family of titles. I like it a lot."

More than a quarter of a century ago, when Bendis was first telling stories about Amazons in Cleveland in the pages of his Caliber series *Quivers* (which CSN told you about, way back then!), did he ever imagine that he would one day be chronicling the tales of Cleveland's "favorite son"? "Oh, dear God—of course not! You have known me all this time. You know how nuts all this is. Between my recent medical scare, the big career move, and the landmark birthday, I had a great deal of opportunity to look back on all of this. Sometimes, I'm not entirely sure I'm not still in the ICU last December. I may be *Jacob's Ladder*-ing this entire thing," Bendis said with a laugh.

The excitement begins on May 30th with the release of *Man of Steel* #1, a \$3.99 comic.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy of your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!



Coming Comics— AfterShock in July

As Sandor prowls the Walled City, Jesse must struggle to free herself from the human supremacists in *Animosity* #16 (by Marguerite Bennett & Rafael De Latorre)—before their hideous plan is complete!

With almost every horrible truth laid bare for the Ritter family, the journey to save Clark and Heather (and Marty??) begins in *Babyteeth* #12 (by Donny Cates & Garry Brown).

Finola has a problem: Her father is losing his mind. All the old king cares about is power... and Finola thinks power is stupid. Finola thinks her vicious older sisters are stupid. Finola thinks the royal court is stupid, and above all she thinks the clans across the country are stupid. So she makes a plan with her good friend Cillian: Let's kill all the clans. And then, we go for dad. See how the plan comes together in *Clankiller* #1 (by Sean Lewis & Antonio Fuso), a tale set against the backdrop of ancient Ireland, complete with clans, mystics, warriors, and monsters of mythic proportions.

Welcome to the future of *Relay* #1 (by Zac Thompson, Eric Bromberg, Donny Cates, & Andy Clarke), a perfect blend of intergalactic travel and community. Every newly discovered planet is unified culturally through a monolithic structure known as the Galactic Relay. The towering monument is meant to inspire conformity of ideas, technology, and progress, but many resent the foreign structure. Jad Carter, a Relay employee, must

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keep the peace and act as an emissary to new civilizations. But when he finds the Relay's mythological creator, Hank Donaldson, his idea of reality and the universe shatters. Equal parts *The Fifth Element* and *Philip K. Dick*, the first issue of this new series picks up where the 2018 Free Comic Book Day *Relay* #0 left off.

AfterShock collected editions include:

- *Animosity* Volume 3 TP: *The Swarm*, collecting *Animosity* #s 9-13.
- *Brilliant Trash* Volume 1 TP, collecting *Brilliant Trash* #s 1-6.

Coming Comics— Scout in July

Evan Dandy is a former pro wrestler turned talk show host who has transcended the wrestling business and has become a huge pop culture superstar. On the eve of his talk show's network premiere, Evan's integrity and former profession come under

fire in *Long Live Pro Wrestling* #0 (by James Haick III & Branko Jovanovic). Will Evan be able to control his temper, or will he lash out and put his network deal in jeopardy?

After venturing to their southern mountain home and learning some shocking news concerning their mother, Piper and Frances have gone missing and are now lost and alone in a place unknowable. Together, they must struggle and survive, in *Long Lost Part Two* #1 (by Matthew Erman & Lisa Sterle), as they make their way back to Hazel Patch from where ever it is that they are.



The Mall #1 (by Don Handfield, James Haick III, & Rafael Loureiro)—set in everyone's favorite decade, the 1980s—is a coming-of-age crime story that takes place in a small Florida town at the height of the popularity of indoor malls. When the head of the Cardini Mob Family mysteriously dies, his three illegitimate children each inherit a store in the mall. While the stores front as legal businesses, the real money is in the illegal businesses. The kids are thrust into a world of crime, all the while just trying to survive normal high school life.

Scout's hit series *Stabbity Bunny* (by Richard Rivera & Dwayne Biddix) is collected in a single volume in *Stabbity Bunny Volume 1 TP*, a 176-page full-color trade paperback.

Coming Comics— Boom! in July

Writer/artist Giulio Macaione makes his comics debut with *Alice: From Dream to Dream* OGN, a breathtaking story about family and friendship. Alice can enter and share dreams by sleeping near someone, a power utterly outside her own control. After moving back to Cincinnati, Alice is stuck sharing a bedroom with her brother and, worse, sharing his dreams. The bright spot in her life is her best friend, Jamie... but there's more history between their families than Alice realizes, and there are secrets buried deep.

When Gumball sleeps through the delivery of his favorite new toy, it turns up missing! Now it's up to him, Darwin, and Anais to follow the clues to a mysterious underground system beneath Elmore and uncover a truth they never thought possible in



SPIDER-MAN



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Amazing World of Gumball OGN Volume 5: Tunnel Kingdom TP (by Kate Sherron & Laura Langston).

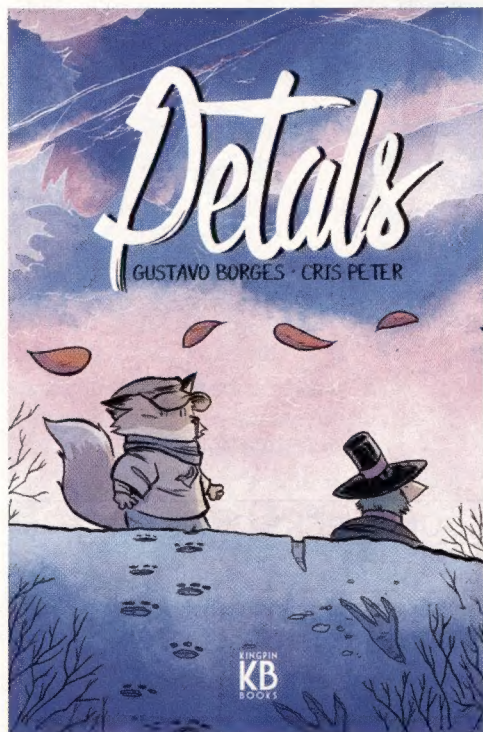
A new drug is sweeping through the streets of New Orleans—one made from the ashes of the dead. Wars are being fought over who will control the supply, while the demand only rises. While the crime families wage war, users begin to experience terrifying visions of the dead coming back to life—through them—in **Bone Parish #1** (by Cullen Bunn and Serif & Mustafa Karasu).

When Jon wins a free vacation, he heads to the beach with Liz, Garfield, Odie, and Nermal for two weeks of fun in the sun in **Garfield: Trouble in Paradise OGN TP** (by Scott Nickel, Mark Eganier, Antonio Alfaro, Dave Alvarez, & Kyle Smart). But will a super-storm, a scary shark sighting, and—even scarier—a snack shortage ruin the trip?

Arriving at the Crystal Castle where he was once a lowly acolyte, Kensho is asked to accept the responsibility as leader of Thra. But he will have to rectify sins of the past before he can decide if he—or anyone—is fit to rule. Meanwhile, the realm of Mithra is being rebuilt by the newly crowned Ember Queen Thurma, whose quest to decide the future of her land is thrown into question when another Fireling makes a claim as the true heir to the throne, in **Jim Henson's Beneath the Dark Crystal** (by Adam Smith & Alexandria Huntington), a sequel to the hit film.

The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers and their allies prepare their final counterattack against Drakkon in **Mighty Morphin Power Rangers #29** (by Kyle Higgins & Daniele Di Nicuolo).

While Matt puts his life on the line to get close to the Rangers, Kimberly must face the Ranger Slayer alone in **Saban's Go Go Power Rangers #11** (by Ryan Parrott & Dan Mora).



During a long winter, a family of foxes struggles to survive the merciless cold. One day, the young cub leaves his house looking for much-needed firewood and crosses paths with a tall and peculiar bird wearing a singular top hat, in **Petals**, an original graphic novel by Gustavo Borges.

Comic Shop News

Intrepid adventurers Pogo and Rex are on a quest for fame and fortune. Their discovery of a special map leads them on an epic journey through dangers, demons and old enemies in **Derek Laufman's all-ages Ruin-world #1**. Just one problem—they've already lost the map.



BOOM! STUDIOS
THE THRILLING ADVENTURE HOUR #1
MAIN COVER BY JONATHAN CASE

Frank and Sadie Doyle are the toast of the upper crust. Headliners on the society pages. And they see ghosts. Follow the DoYLES on a night when having a drink (or ten) with friends goes horribly, and perhaps predictably, wrong at a haunted house, in **The Thrilling Adventure Hour #1** (by Ben Acker, Ben Blacker, & MJ Erickson).

Tony Millionaire's Sea Monsters Coloring Book offers over forty black-and-white illustrations with spyglass-like detail, featuring everything imaginable above and below the high seas, along with a couple of special guest land-lubbers.

Boom! collected editions include:

- **Klaus: The New Adventures of Santa Claus HC**, collecting Grant Morrison's *Klaus and the Witch of Winter* and *Klaus and the Crisis in Xmasville*.
- **Jim Henson's Labyrinth Shortcuts HC**, collecting *The Labyrinth 30th Anniversary Special*, *The Labyrinth 2017 Special*, and two never-before-seen stories.
- **Lucas Stand: Inner Demons TP**, collecting the four-issue limited series.
- **Mighty Morphin Power Rangers Volume 6 TP**, collecting MMPR #s 21–24.
- **Over the Garden Wall Volume 5 TP**, collecting *Over the Garden Wall* #s 17–20.



• **Planet of the Apes Archive Volume 4 HC**, collecting another heaping helping of Marvel's *Planet of the Apes* series from the 1970s.

• **Slam! The Next Jam TP**, collecting the four-issue limited series.

• **Steven Universe Volume 3: Field Researching TP**, collecting *Steven Universe* #s 9–12.

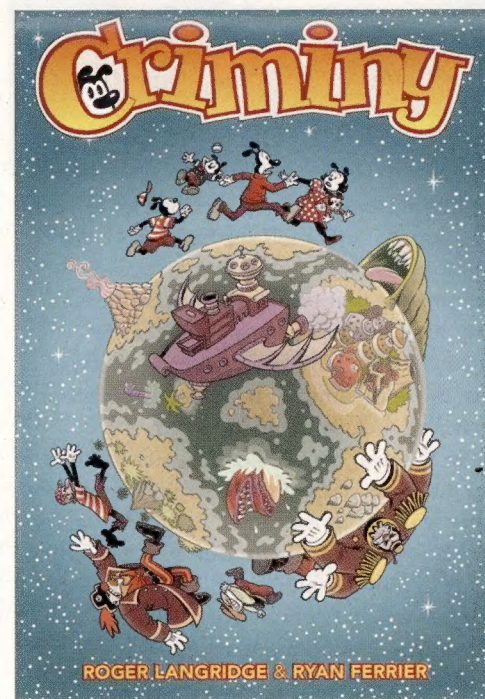
• **The Thrilling Adventure Hour: A Spirited Romance TP**, collecting *The Thrilling Adventure Hour Presents: Beyond Belief* #s 0–4.

Coming Comics—Dark Horse in July

Journey along with Team Avatar as they rescue a pumpkin farmer waylaid by monsters, help an old rival with a hair-raising problem, and reflect on what it means to save the world in **Avatar: The Last Airbender—Team Avatar Tales TP**, featuring work by Gene Luen Yang, Faith Erin Hicks, Carla Speed McNeil, Ron Koertge, Dave Scheidt, Sara Goetter, and more.

With his ownership of Slayer memories, Harth has come from the future to destroy Buffy and all the Slayers, stealing their power for his own. At his side are demons and evil-kind, a massive army that Buffy and the Scoobies weren't expecting. To even the playing field, the gang travels to the future to recruit Fray in **Buffy the Vampire Slayer Season 12: The Reckoning #2** (by Christos Gage, Joss Whedon, George Jeanty, & Karl Story).

Daggum Criminy's peaceful life is suddenly interrupted as pirates invade his island in **Criminy Volume 1 TP** (by Roger Langridge



& Ryan Ferrier), casting Criminy's family out as refugees into the wild unknown in search of a new home. Soon, the Criminy's find themselves hopping from one strange locale to another, each with its own bizarre environment, people, and challenges.

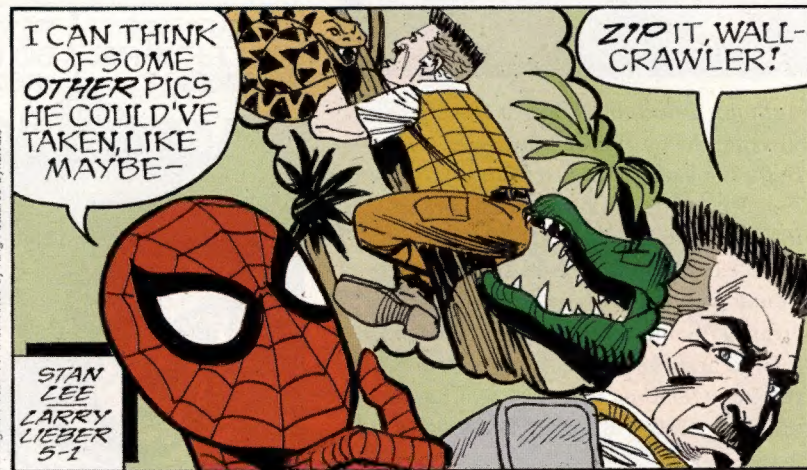


Dedicating a new submarine, Mr. Incredible is interrupted by the dastardly Bomb Voyage—who is intent on crushing the crowd of onlookers underneath the sub, in **Disney•Pixar's The Incredibles 2 #1**, which features tales set during and after the events of *The Incredibles 2* feature film!

Just when you thought Neighborville was safe, the Garden Warfare is back on, in **Plants vs Zombies: Garden Warfare Volume 2 HC** (by Paul Tobin & Tim Lattie).

A thousand years in the future, a collection of superheroes, inspired by the legendary heroes of Black Hammer Farm, must band together to save the planet from an authoritarian regime, in **The Quantum Age: From the World of Black Hammer #1** (by Jeff Lemire & Wilfredo Torres). A young Martian must find a way to re-form the Quantum League to save the world while solving the riddle of what happened to the great heroes of the twentieth century.

Rocket, Nuri, and Screech find themselves in Paris in 1933, where a rare and mysterious painting from the Middle Ages has been stolen from the Louvre Museum—and Nuri's uncle is the prime suspect! The young adventurers are soon hot on the trail of the stolen artwork, and the secret contained within may lead all the way to the most mysterious and sought-after treasure in his-



tory, in Sean O'Neill's *Rocket Robinson and the Secret of the Saint*.

In Chicago, an unknown woman appears flying at speeds of 120 miles per hour and at heights reaching 2,000 feet. Then she suddenly dies in a fiery explosion mid-air. No one knows who she was, how she flew, or why. Luna, a disturbed fifteen-year-old girl, becomes obsessed with learning everything about her in *She Could Fly #1* (by Christopher Cantwell & Martin Morazzo). Will cracking the secrets of the Flying Woman's inner life lead to Luna's liberation from her own troubled mind?

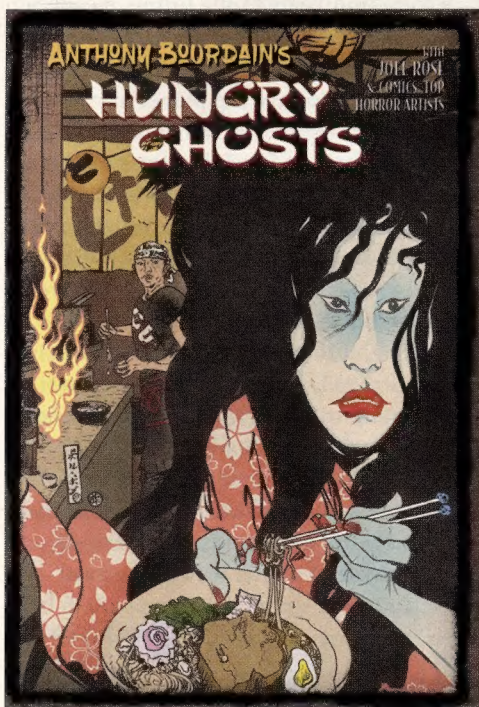
A group of terran space scavengers hope to pull off the job of their lifetimes, in *StarCraft: Scavengers #1* (by Jody Houser & Garbriel Buzman), ignoring a recent United Earth Directorate treaty to pillage a derelict protoss ship.

Steven Universe Adult Coloring Book Volume 1 TP features 96 pages of images waiting on you to add the colors.

The mantle has passed. The god king is dead. Darius III is now both king of Persia and pharaoh of Egypt. But a tiger force strikes in Asia Minor, on a collision course with Persian forces, in Frank Miller's *300* prequel *Xerxes: The Fall of the House of Darius and the Rise of Alexander #4*.

Dark Horse collected editions include:

- *The Alcoholic Tenth Anniversary Expanded Edition TP*, which includes a new prose piece by Jonathan Ames expanding on the story material, as well as a special behind-the-scenes artist section!
- *Aliens/Predator/Prometheus/AvP Complete Life and Death HC*, collecting the entire *Life and Death* story cycle in a deluxe, oversized hardcover.



- *Anthony Bourdain's Hungry Ghosts HC*, collecting the four-issue miniseries.
- *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Giles—Girl Blue TP*, collecting the four-issue miniseries.
- *Buffy Season 10 Library Edition Volume 2 HC*, collecting *Buffy Season 10* #s 11–20.
- *Conan Omnibus Volume 6: Savagery and Sorrow TP*, collecting *Conan the Barbarian* #s 13–25 and *Conan the Avenger* #s 1–6.
- *Hellboy Omnibus Volume 4: Hellboy in Hell TP*, collecting the entire *Hellboy in Hell* saga.

• *Koshchei the Deathless TP*, collecting the six-issue series plus bonus material.

• *Usagi Yojimbo/Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Complete Collection TP*, which contains every Usagi/TMNT crossover in existence.

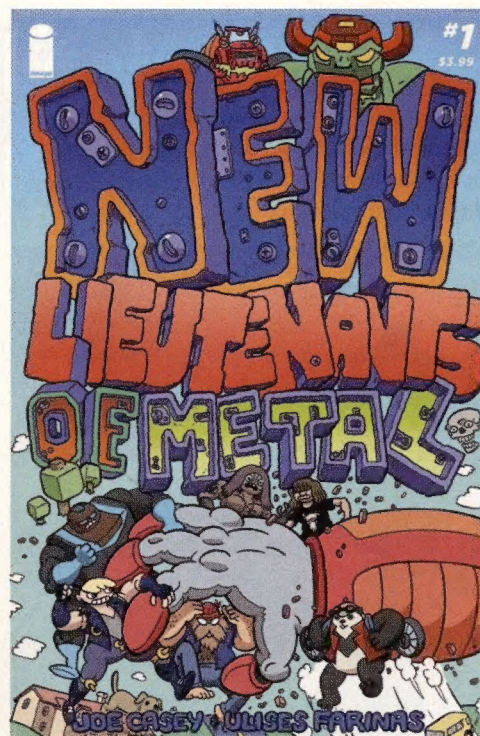
Coming Comics—Image in July

Jedidiah Jenkins is a farmer—but his cash crop isn't corn or soy. Jed grows fast-healing, plug-and-play human organs. Lose a finger? Need a new liver? He's got you covered. Unfortunately, strange produce isn't the only thing Jed's got buried. Deep in the soil of the Jenkins Family Farm, something dark has taken root, and it's beginning to bloom, in *Farmhand #1* (by Rob Guillory & Taylor Wells).



Leslie is a simple pig girl. She loves sushi; she's stuck with a job she hates, and she lives under a brutal totalitarian government—one that punishes transgressors for anything deemed "unnatural." Leslie dreams of something different for herself. But those dreams are becoming dangerous in Mirka Andolfo's *Unnatural #1*.

In the near future, Los Angeles is a city on the brink of evolution, struggling with a new wave of terror fueled by black-market technology. Enter Aphrodite V, the bleeding edge of biomechanics, and LA's best hope against a new enemy—one that seeks to become a god among machines—in *Aphrodite V #1* (by Bryan Hill & Jeff Spokes).



Meet the New Lieutenants of Metal, a precision strike force ready to face any threat, and the most kick-ass, head-banging heroes ever assembled! Their names are legend: the Mighty Krieg, Vandenberg Riot, Manowarrior, Steppenwulf. Beset on all sides by a roster of vicious foes, the New Lieutenants of Metal are guaranteed to deliver you unto greater comic book glory, in *New Lieutenants of Metal #1* (by Joe Casey & Ullises Farinas).

Visit the United States of America, after the Second Civil War, in *New World #1* (by Alex Kot, Tradd Moore, & Heather Moore). Two lovers meet: one, a straight-edge vegan hacker anarchist boy with a penchant for messing with the State; the other, a chaotic, hedonistic cop with a reality TV show and a license to kill. This really shouldn't happen—and yet, somehow, it does. And soon, the entire state of New California is after them.

Welcome to Outpost Zero, the smallest town in the universe. The people there work the land, go to the fights every Friday night, and tuck their children into bed—but the Outpost is no place for dreams or aspirations. To survive is ambitious enough. As Alea and her friends graduate to adulthood on a frozen world never meant to support human life, something stirs, in *Outpost Zero #1* (by Sean McKeever, Alexandre Tefenkgi, & Jean-Francois Beaulieu).

The Rat Queens take to the neon streets of Palisade as an elite team of shadow operatives, in *Rat Queens Special: Neon Static* (by

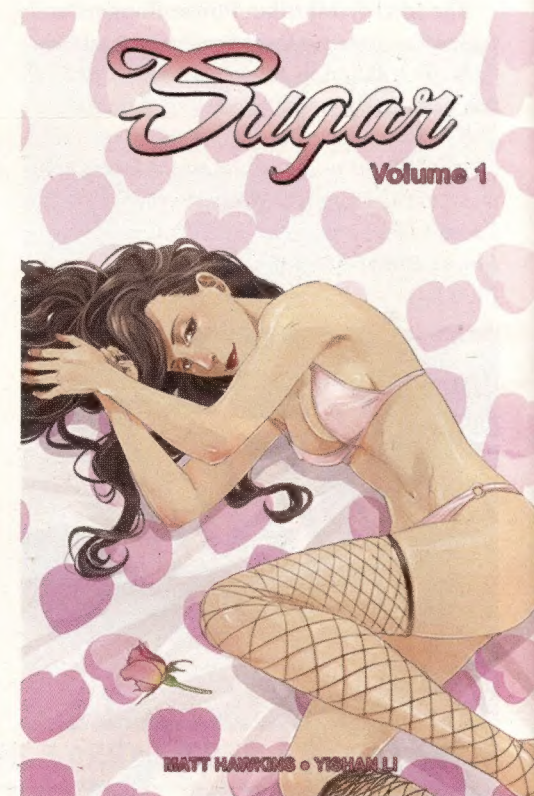
Kurtis J. Wiebe & Will Kirkby). An anonymous fiend creeps through the dark web, stealing identities and blackmailing innocent civilians for cold, hard Goldyen—and only the Queens can stop him!

Beowulf TP (by Santiago Garcia & David Rubin) tells the tale of a Scandinavian hero in lands that would become what is now Denmark and Sweden: A monster, Grendel, has arrived in the kingdom of the Danes, devouring its men and women for twelve years until Beowulf arrives to save them. This adaptation faithfully follows the original story for a new version that is neither revisionist nor postmodern, but that captures the tone and important details of the poem.

Shannon Wheeler's *Memoirs of a Very Stable Genius TP* offers an irreverent book of personal short stories and gags featuring his critically acclaimed humor, pathos, and honesty—including a 40-page full-color section!

In a fantastical post-industrial desert, fifteen-year-old Boetema suddenly develops the ability to astral-project to other planets while she sleeps. When she accidentally gets a young man hurt on a planet light-years away, she must figure out a way to project back to save him, in *Afar TP* (by Leila Del Duca & Kit Seaton).

A companion book to both *Sunstone* and *Swing*, *Sugar Volume 1 TP* (by Matt Hawkins, Jenni Cheung, & Yishan Li) focuses on a cou-



ple who embark on a relationship that starts as more of an arrangement and ends with them falling in love... but that love has consequences! Julia works three jobs and is trying to finish college in her early twenties. John is recently divorced, still stinging from that breakup, and trying to start anew. Neither has ever done anything like this before, and the emotional swings they face challenge what could be a perfect match.



"TAINTED LOVE" A BIOCHEMICAL ROMANCE

- Image collected editions include:
- *The Beef TP*, collecting *The Beef* #s 1-5.
 - *Curse Words Volume 3 TP: Hole Damned World*, collecting *Curse Words* #s 11-15.
 - *Days of Hate Volume 1 TP*, collecting *Days of Hate* #s 1-6.
 - *Death of Love TP*, collecting *Death of Love* #s 1-5.
 - *Elephantmen Mammoth Volume 3 TP*, collecting *Elephantmen*, *Man and Elephant* #1, and *Elephantmen* #s 31-50.
 - *Fear Agent Final Edition Volume 2 TP*, collecting *Fear Agent* #s 12-21.
 - *The Further Adventures of Nick Wilson Volume 1 TP*, collecting *The Further Adventures of Nick Wilson* #s 1-4.
 - *Habitat TP*, collecting the story originally serialized in *Island Magazine*.
 - *Invincible Compendium Volume 3 TP*, collecting *Invincible* #s 97-144.
 - *Manifest Destiny Volume 6 TP*, collecting *Manifest Destiny* #s 31-36.
 - *Omnibus TP*, collecting *Michael Avon Oeming's 86 Voltz*, *Parliament of Justice*, *God Complex*, *Six*, and more.
 - *Outcast* by Kirkman & Azaceta *Volume 6 TP*, collecting *Outcast* #s 31-36.
 - *Rat Queens Volume 5 TP: Colossal Magic Nothing*, collecting *Rat Queens Volume 2* #s 6-10.
 - *Regression Volume 2 TP: Disciples*, collecting *Regression* #s 6-10.
 - *Sleepless Volume 1 TP*, collecting *Sleepless* #s 1-6.
 - *Spawn Origins Volume 1 TP*, collecting *Spawn* #s 1-6.
 - *VS Volume 1 TP*, collecting *VS* #s 1-5.
 - *Warframe Volume 1 TP*, collecting *Warframe* #s 1-5.
 - *Witchblade Volume 1 TP*, collecting *Witchblade* #s 1-5.

Comic Shop News

Back in December, we presented the 27th annual *CSN Red K Awards*, a blend of commendations and critiques dedicated to pointing out some of the best and worst of the past year. At the end of that feature, we encouraged you, our readers, to send us your own Red K Awards for the best and worst of 2017—and that's just what you did! So let's take a look at what our readers had to say!

The "Always Bet on Black" Award Black Panther and Black Lightning

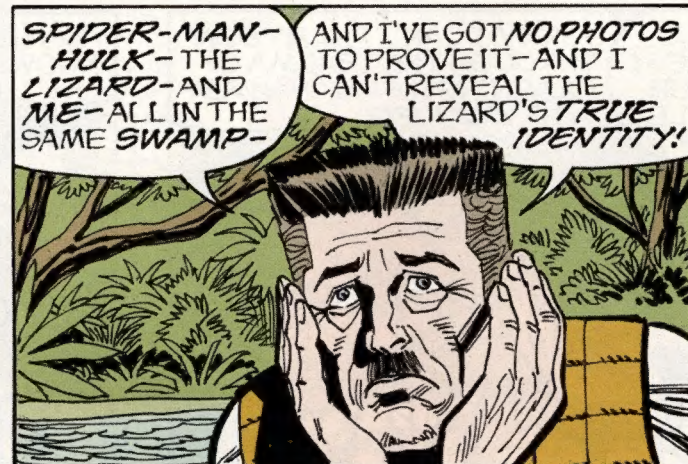
"While the King of Wakanda dominates the nation's box office, Jefferson Pierce is holding strong in Freeland, on the CW. Both heroes demonstrate what being heroic is, while only using violence as a last resort. It's a pleasure to see strong, male leads surrounded by equally powerful females, without any one side being in the shadow of the other."

—Vincent Bellizia

The "America the Beautiful" Award Captain America

"Thank you, Mark Waid & Chris Samnee, for giving us a book that honors the Captain America ideal. This is a *Captain America* book that Jack Kirby would be proud of, and it pays tribute to Cap's role as the ethical center of the Marvel Universe."

—Jeff Marsh



COMIC SHOP NEWS 27th ANNUAL RED K AWARDS

The "Their Word Is Their Bond" Award

Dynamite's James Bond comics

"Before the first *James Bond* book launched, CSN talked with Dynamite and the creative team, and they said that they were going to try to capture the feel of *Ian Fleming's* novels and not the films. And that's just what they've done, which is why I'm still buying *James Bond* comics."

—Bearden... James Bearden

The "Barberans at the Gate" Award

DC's Hanna-Barbera Comics

"Between those great DC/Hanna-Barbera crossovers (*Adam Strange/Future Quest* was my personal favorite) and the updated, off-beat takes on Hanna-Barbera classics like *Scooby Apocalypse*, 2017 was a great year for all of us who grew up with Hanna-Barbera cartoons. And

now DC has announced a new wave of the crossovers for 2018. Calloo Callay!"

—Diane Ezelle

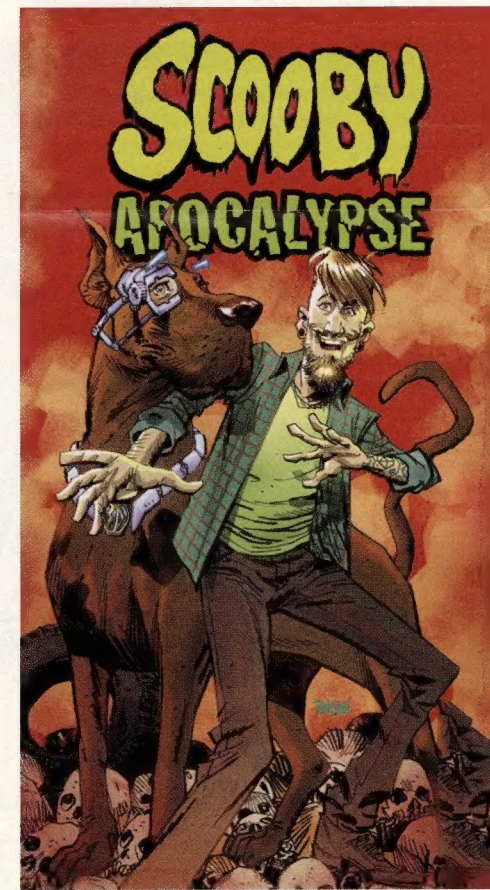
The Lazarus Award Ominous Press

"The early 1990s saw numerous new publishers competing for a share of the market, which had been riding an incredible, speculator-driven wave. In an attempt to capitalize on this influx of interest, these independent companies put their product against what was being offered by the Big Two. But despite producing work of high quality, most of them succumbed to the market's subsequent deflation and perished within a few years. Outside the establishment, Image Comics was probably the only noteworthy survivor of this cataclysm. On the other hand, Ominous Press—a promising company founded by fan-favorite creator, *Bart Sears*, and guided mainly by his vision—was a notable casualty."

"Or so it seemed."

"Rather unbelievably, last year marked the almost Biblical resurrection of Ominous Press—nearly a quarter-century after falling into publishing oblivion! With help from IDW, *Bart Sears* has been able to re-introduce his original core concepts to old and new readers alike... If only IDW would play the part of 'miracle worker' again by reuniting *Jim Shooter* & *David Lapham* on a new *Defiant Comics Warriors of Plasm* series!..."

—Steve J. Begg



The "Not So Merry Readers" Award

Merry Men

"Oni Press has left their *Merry Men* series in print limbo, although issue #s 4 & 5 are available digitally. But old folk who can't deal with pixels and Luddites like myself still await the print publication... hopefully before the trade paperback!"

—Raymond Saint-Pierre

The "Information Overload" Award

Everybody!

"With *Previews* now at 600 pages, a Marvel catalogue at 100 pages, *Image Plus* at 80 pages, weekly CSNs, plus Marvel's *FOOM!* and DC's *Direct Currents* and *DC Nation*, I've had to cut back on my actual comic book purchases so I have the time to read all the catalogs and news magazines!"

—Steven Solomon

The "Cover Less" Award

Action Lab, Avatar, Boundless, and Zenescope

"Why don't all of these companies quit doing one cheesy cover variant after another and put a little of that money into creating books that people actually want to read?"

—Nico Dellardo



The "Gone Far Too Soon" Award

Bernie Wrightson

"Once I had a chance to open my copy of IDW's *Bernie Wrightson Artifact Edition*, I realized all over again just how great a loss comics had suffered with the death of Bernie Wrightson. No modern artist was more of a master of fine-line illustration than Bernie was. Going through this book thrills me because it's so beautiful, but it also makes me sad that we won't be able to look forward to many more years of new Bernie Wrightson material."

—Kris Eberhart



The "Crom!! What A Great Crossover!" Award

Wonder Woman/Conan

"Gail Simone & Aaron Lopresti took one of the wackiest ideas for a crossover involving two characters I never thought would mesh and turned in one of the most entertaining series of the year."

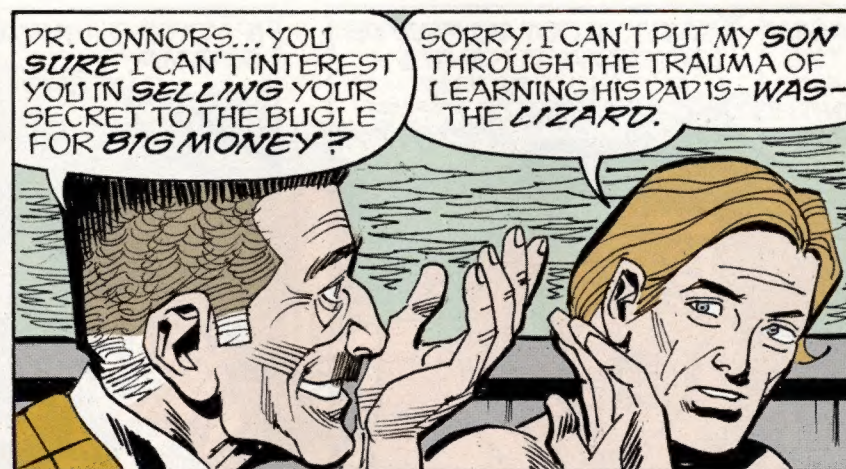
—Tony Bowers

The "Fold, Spindle, And Mutilate" Award

Flimsy Cover Stock

"For decades, comic book cover stock was a heavy, glossy paper that not only featured eye-catching graphics, but also protected the flimsier interior paper of the comic book itself. Some publishers even used heavy cardstock covers. Now it seems that major publishers like Marvel and DC are using cover stock that is even flimsier than the paper they use inside the books. It looks wavy and flimsy on the comic shop racks, and it's almost impossible to find near-mint condition copies of most comics because of the cheap paper. For a field that emphasizes collectibility and condition, this is a really backwards move."

—Eduardo Rosanas



The "Oh, No! It's Lobo" Award

Lobo in Justice League of America

"Am I the only person who thinks that Lobo is just about the most outdated, pointless character in comics today? The only thing that could seem much more inappropriate would be an alien Harvey Weinstein..."

—Valerie Weaver

The "DC's Hot DJ" Award

Dan Jurgens

"I hope DC never forgets that it was Dan Jurgens whose *Superman: Lois and Clark* series laid the groundwork for the whole Rebirth phenomenon, and that he's the man who made *Superman* DC's flagship title once again. Take care of this man, DC: He's a comics treasure!"

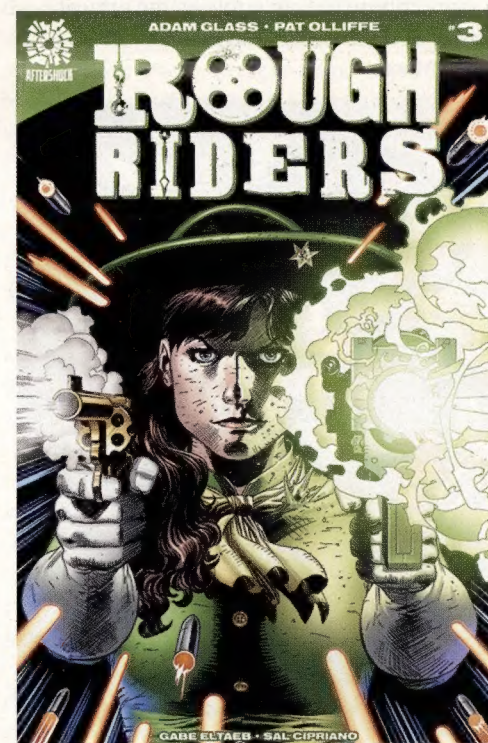
—Tracey Joyner

The "Shockingly Good" Award

AfterShock Comics

"These guys pretty much came out of nowhere and gave us such great books as *Animosity*, *Rough Riders*, *Insexts*, and *Babyteeth*. There are lots of publishers who have been around for a decade or more and have yet to publish a book as good as these!"

—Denise McIlveen



The "What Were They Thinking?" Award

Disappearance of Thought Balloons

"When did ideas in the heads of characters in the form of thought balloons become passé? Has this style gone the way of the omnipresent narrator, numbered pages, and narrative panels? Internal monologues are now shown as a rectangle, done in the first person, as if every character is writing a journal or dictating his or her adventures to some unknown party. Why is that? What was wrong with how things were laid out for seventy-plus years? Sure, it's good to refresh things and try new ways, but there's something about reading dialogue in standard balloons, right next to their actual thoughts in the 'cloud' bubble, that made things more concise and clear, as to who was saying (and thinking) what, and to whom."

—Vincent Bellizia

The "Jim Dandy" Award

Archaia's Jim Henson Comics

"Both Archaia's *Power of the Dark Crystal* and *Labyrinth* specials (not to mention the just-started *Storyteller* book) are great ways to honor the legacy of Jim Henson as well as great introductions to a new generation unfamiliar with his works."

—Tony Bowers

The "Animal Magnetism" Award

Animosity

"Thank you, Marguerite Bennett and AfterShock, for turning my favorite comic book into my favorite comic book franchise. I love the whole 'sentient animal' concept, and can't wait to see what new twists each issue will bring."

—Vicki Schaefer

The "Lega-See Their Error" Award

Marvel's Legacy Numbering

"I don't mind Legacy numbering, but I hate it when it's incorrect or dishonest. There's no way that *Journey into Mystery* #s 1-82 should count towards *Thor* numbering, for instance, because he didn't even exist until *Journey into Mystery* #83. There's no need to pad the numbers—just give us an honest, correct list of the core issues that



actually feature the title character and use that to calculate your numbers!"

—Eddie Rivera

The "Frank-ly, I'm Confused" Award Frank Miller and Dark Knight 3: Master Race

"Was Frank Miller vitally involved in the creation of this series or not? Did he cowrite it with Brian Azzarello, or didn't he? Does he consider this a genuine sequel to *The Dark Knight Returns* and *The Dark Knight Strikes Again*, or doesn't he? We got all sorts of conflicting information about this during the course of the series, and even though it ended last year, I'm still not sure what the real story is."

—Chris Glancy

The "Ultimate Surprise" Award Spider-Men 2

"Brian Bendis may be leaving Marvel for the greener pastures of DC, but he gave Marvel the greatest farewell gift of all: He brought back the Ultimate Universe at the end of the *Spider-Men 2* miniseries, complete with the original Ultimate Peter Parker Spider-Man and a fascinating group of Ultimates that includes Riri Williams! I hope Marvel realizes what a gift this is and adds a new Ultimate Spider-Man title (starring the Ultimate Peter Parker) to their line ASAP. They may not have Brian Bendis to continue the story, but they still have Mark Bagley to do the art—and judging from his work at the end of *Spider-Men 2* #5, he still has what it takes!"

—Michael Norsworthy

The "Not Horsing Around" Award Dark Horse's Creepy and Eerie Archives

"Hey, did you see that just a couple of months after CSN gave Dark Horse a Red K Award for their unfinished *Creepy* and *Eerie*

Archives, Dark Horse announced *Creepy Archives Volume 26*? A month later, they announced *Eerie Archives Volume 24*. Maybe they just needed reminding!"

—Kelly Portman

The "If There's Any Justice" Award Tom Taylor's Injustice

"Since 2013 Tom Taylor has constructed a world both familiar and completely new with his take on the DC Universe in *Injustice*. It's simply the best worldbuilding at either DC or Marvel since Jack Kirby created the Fourth World."

—Steven Solomon

The "Comics Fan Dumb" Award Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri

"What's one of the ways Sam Rockwell's deputy is revealed to be not awfully smart? You got it. He's a comic reader. Really, Hollywood? That's still the stereotype?"

—Mike King

And there you have it: the best and worst of 2017, according to you, our CSN readers! Thanks to all of you who submitted your own nominations, and I wish we had room to offer something from everyone (you might be surprised to learn how many comics or creators were spotlighted in five or more different Red K submissions, so some of the awards that made the cut actually represent the sentiments of many other readers as well). And look for us in late December, when we'll do it all over again for 2018!

(Special recognition goes to Steven Solomon, who submitted more Red K Awards than any other reader this year, beating out long-time contributor Tony Bowers by one award. We weren't able to include all of their awards in this issue—we



wanted to include some of the best that our other readers had to offer, too—but we certainly look forward to seeing what Steven and Tony have to say each year!")

If you enjoy reading CSN each week, don't thank us—thank your retailer! They pay for the copies they give out, because they know that informed readers are better customers. And because, you know, love.

twitter.com/csnsider



When YouTube superstar, Markiplier, takes a break from making videos, he relaxes by reading some of his favorite comic books. But after he receives a mysterious watch in the mail and activates it without reading the enclosed instructions, it's anything but relaxing, as he falls into a dimensional portal and into the comics he was reading!

Now he's fighting for his life against vampires, dragons, werewolves, zombies, aliens, and monsters that defy description. Thankfully, there are also incredible heroes he can team up with to get through each adventure... but can any of them help him get back home?

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